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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KISL](#) [KCOR](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH SULAWESI: JUSUF KALLA PICKS HIS GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE, BUT WILL THE VOTERS LISTEN?

REF: SURABAYA 39

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Portions of this message are sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

**¶11. (SBU) Summary:** On October 15, Vice President and Golkar National Chairman Jusuf Kalla strongly urged Golkar elites in South Sulawesi to support incumbent Amin Syam and his running mate Mansyur Ramly in the November 5 gubernatorial elections. Public reaction has been negative, suggesting that the public may not be inclined to follow instructions in the first direct gubernatorial elections in South Sulawesi. Local observers commented to us that Kalla will use all of the tools at his disposal to get his choice elected in what is really an experiment in party mobilization before the 2009 presidential election. End Summary.

NEPOTISM OR CAPABILITIES?

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**¶12. (U)** According to local Makassar daily Fajar (a Jawa Pos company), Vice President Jusuf Kalla told local Golkar cadres to vote for incumbent Amin Syam in the November 5 gubernatorial election. In a closed door meeting with Golkar elites on October 15, Golkar Party National Chairman Kalla reportedly urged participants not to have any doubts about Golkar's candidates, noting that his brother-in-law Mansyur Ramly was Amin Syam's running mate. Kalla reportedly told the audience made up of regents and mayors from throughout South Sulawesi that he had already instructed his companies Kalla Group and Bosowa Group to help Amin Syam and Mansyur Ramly win the election.

**¶13. (SBU)** Reaction to Kalla's reported instructions to "vote for Amin Syam" were greeted with dismay by readers of Fajar online, who expressed disappointment about Kalla's decision to take sides in the gubernatorial election. They complained that he was being neither neutral nor democratic. Hasbi Abdulla, Director of the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), told the Consulate that his informal poll of the "grass roots" suggested that the population was most disturbed by Kalla's statements urging members to vote for a family member. Kalla was perceived as supporting these candidates because of nepotism, not because of capability or personality.

EXPERIMENTATION WITH DIRECT ELECTIONS

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¶4. (SBU) Sukriansyah, Editor of Fajar, told Consulate Surabaya that the public has long known that Kalla firmly supported Amin Syam and Mansur Ramly and would use his economic "power" to insure his choice wins. He observed, however, that Kalla's support may be less influential in this first direct election. Sukriansyah explained that Kalla understand the realities of a direct election where parties have less influence and thus had no choice but to publicly support Amin Syam. According to Sukriansyah, Kalla will go all out to ensure victory for Amin Syam as an "experiment" on how to mobilize Golkar voters to support his own potential candidacy for president in 2009.

¶5. (SBU) Hasbi Abdulla agreed with Sukriansyah's assessment of the uncertainties surrounding a direct election. He said, "People are smarter than before. They might vote for anybody they like despite the fact that political elites have directed them to vote a certain way." Pointing to the 2004 presidential election as illustrative, Hasbi observed that President Yudhoyono was an unknown politician from a small, new political party, and the people voted for him.

BUGIS VOTE

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¶6. (SBU) Hasbi suggested that Kalla will also try to draw on his Bugis ethnicity to persuade voters to select Amin Syam. Both Kalla and Amin Syam are considered "real" Bugis, as compared with "Bugis Makassar." In contrast, Amin Syam's most formidable competition Syahrul Yasin Limpo, the current vice governor, is a Bugis Makassar. His running mate, Agus Arifin Nu'man, is a real Bugis.

¶7. (SBU) Kalla's recent statements that there would be an "all Golkar final" in the gubernatorial election reflects the fact that Amin Syam, Syahrul Yasin Limpo, and Agus Arifin Nu'man are all current or previous Golkar cadres and still support Golkar ideology (see reftel). From Hasbi Abdulla's perspective, Syahrul's biggest competition for the governor's office is not

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Amin Syam, but Jusuf Kalla.  
MCCELLAND